

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed August 10, 2005:

claims 1-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112;

claims 1-9 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a); and

claims 1-30 where pending.

In a previous Response, claims 10-19 and 21-30 were withdrawn in compliance with a Restriction Requirement. In this response:

claims 1 and 20 are amended; and

claims 1-9 and 20 are currently under consideration.

For the reasons set forth in detail below, applicants submit that the present application, as amended, is in condition for allowance.

Response to Section 112 Rejection of Claims 1-9

Claims 1-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. To overcome this rejection, independent claim 1 has been amended per a telephone discussion with the Examiner on December 5, 2005, in which the undersigned and his colleague, Ata'u'llah Arjomand, discussed and agreed on the distinguishing features of the rejected claims. Therefore, the undersigned respectfully requests the withdrawal of Section 112 rejections of independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-9.

The undersigned also would like to thank the Examiner for taking the time to discuss this matter and other rejection basis of this Office Action.

Response to Section 103 Rejection of Claims 1-9 and 20

Claims 1-9 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hayes et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,687,830) in view of Hutchinson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,398,001).

Independent claims 1 and 20 are amended to clarify the recited elements of these claims. These amendments are also based on the above mentioned telephone conversation and the agreements with the Examiner on the distinguishing features of the rejected claims. Therefore, the undersigned respectfully requests the withdrawal of the Section 103 rejection of claims 1 and 20. If the Examiner finds a summary of the telephone conversation helpful or necessary, the Examiner is requested to indicate such requisite.

Claims 2-9 depend from independent claim 1 and accordingly includes the features of claim 1. For the reasons discussed above and for the additional features of claims 2-9, a *prima facie* case of obviousness under Section 103 has not been established with respect to claims 2-9 either and accordingly the Section 103 rejection of these claims should also be withdrawn.

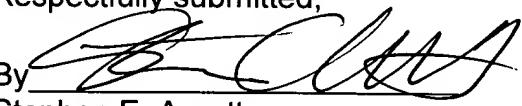
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the claims pending in the application comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and patentably define over the applied art. A Notice of Allowance is, therefore, respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-6351.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 50-0665, under Order No. 213828022US1 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: December 12, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

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